

## Message Text

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67

ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AF-10 ARA-11 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10 SCS-03 SCA-01 RSR-01

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R 032042 Z JUL 73

FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8659

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FOR D/PW, FRANK SIEVERTS

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: . MOPS, SGEN

SUBJ: MIA MOTHER RECEIVED AT UN WITH VIVA GROUP

1. SUMMARY. MRS. CATHERINE HELWIG, MOTHER OF AN MIA, WAS RECEIVED AT THE UN BY ROBERT MULLER, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE CHEF DE CABINET, ACTING FOR THE SYG. SHE AND A GROUP OF 12 RELATIVES OF OTHER MIAS SPOKE TO THE UN CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, MRS. HELWIG CALLED AT USUN AND WAS RECEIVED BY AMBASSADOR BENNETT. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER A BRIEF INTRODUCTION MULLER STATED THE CONCERN OF THE SYG FOR POWS AND SERVICEMEN MISSING IN ACTION IN SEASIA. HE CITED THE WILLINGNESS OF THE SYG TO INTERVENE IN THEIR BEHALF WHEN SUCH ACTION WOULD BE APPROPRIATE, BUT CITED THE FACT THAT ARTICLE 8 OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT PRESENTLY PROVIDES A BILATERAL MECHANISM FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF THE STATUS OF MIAS. HE FURTHER POINTED OUT THAT WHILE THE SYG DOES NOT HAVE THE POLITICAL POWER OF SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT AT HIS DISPOSAL, HE WOULD BE WILLING TO USE HIS GOOD OFFICES TO HELP ASCERTAIN  
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THE FATE OF THESE MEN IF THE PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED  
EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO ASSUME SUCH A ROLE. ONE MEMBER OF  
THE GROUP WITH MRS. HELWIG RECALLED DAG HAMMERSKJOLD'S  
INTERVENTION WITH CHOU EN LAI TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF 20 POWS  
AFTER THE KOREAN CONFLICT AND ANOTHER EXPRESSED THE HOPE  
THAT THE SYG COULD USE HIS GOOD OFFICES NOT JUST IN THE  
PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES BUT WHENEVER POWS WERE BEING DETAINED  
CONTRARY TO INTERNATIONAL LAW.

3. IN A BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP SET  
FORTH THEIR CONCERN FOR THE MIAS AND RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS.  
THEY CONVEYED TO THE PRESS THEIR IMPRESSION THAT MULLER  
HAD PROMISED THAT THE SYG WOULD TAKE ACTION ON HIS RETURN TO  
NY RATHER THAN IN THE ASSURANCE OF MULLER THAT THE SYG WOULD  
TAKE ACTION WHEN IT APPEARED THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD HAVE  
A POSITIVE EFFECT.

4. AMBASSADOR BENNETT THEN RECEIVED THE GROUP AT USUN. ONE  
MEMBER OF THE GROUP MADE AN EMOTIONAL CHARGE THAT THE USG WAS  
GUILTY OF UNTRUTHFUL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE FATE OF THE MIAS,  
AND HE SAID THAT THE USG SHOULD START LEVELING WITH THE AMERICAN  
PEOPLE ON THIS SUBJECT. AMBASSADOR BENNETT SAID HE COULD NOT  
GO ALONG WITH AN IDEA OFFICIALS WERE BEING OTHER THAN HONEST  
ABOUT THE SITUATION BUT COULD UNDERSTAND HOW, GIVEN THE  
COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM AND THE DIFFICULTY OF SORTING OUT  
CONFICTING RUMORS AND REPORTS, THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ON  
OCCASION CONFICTING STATEMENTS MADE BY USG SPOKESMEN. ANOTHER  
MEMBER OF THE GROUP AGREED WITH AMBASSADOR BENNETT BUT HE ADDED  
THERE WAS A NEED FOR BETTER COORDINATING AND A MORE UNIFIED  
STORY. HE ADDED THAT THE USG MUST NOT TAKE A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE  
AND SAY THAT IT HAS NO EVIDENCE OF LIVING MIAS, NOT  
ONLY BECAUSE THERE IS CONTRARY EVIDENCE BUT ALSO BECAUSE SUCH  
STATEMENTS PREPARE THE WAY FOR NOTH VIETNAMESE DENIAL OF  
THEIR EXISTENCE. THE GROUP CLAIMED TO HAVE BROUGHT TO DOD  
ATTENTION 83 DISCREPENCIES IN THE LIST OF MIAS ISSUED AND  
CITED IN PARTICULAR THE CASES OF DODGE AND HRDLIKA. AMBASSADOR  
BENNETT PROMISED TO INFORM THE USG OF THE MEETING AND  
WAS IN TURN REQUESTED BY THE GROUP TO CONVEY TO THEIR  
REP ANY USG RESPONSE.

5. THE GROUP IS VIVA (VOICES IN VITAL AMERICA), 635 MADISON  
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AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022. ITS PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN WAS  
JOHN FRANCHI.  
BENNETT

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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